

Degree 3, (English Honours)

Paper – Eight

Section - 2

Subject- **Linguistics**

Phonetics and Its Branches

Definition of Phonetics

Phonetics is the scientific study of the production, transmission and reception of speech sounds. It studies the medium of spoken language. Touching upon physiology and physics, phonetics is now a pure science that studies speech process, including the anatomy, neurology and pathology of speech, as well as the articulation, description, classification, production and perception of speech sounds. It looks at speech from distinct but interdependent viewpoints. It studies the speech organs, which produce sounds of language; its studies waves, the physical form in which sounds are transmitted through the air from one person to another; and it studies the way in which human beings perceives sounds through the medium of the ear.

Phonetics studies the defining characteristics of all human vocal noise, concentrates its attention on those sounds which occur in the language of the world. In other words, **phoneticians** try to study how the various organs of

speech --- **the lungs, the larynx, the soft palate, the tongue and the lip...**
function in the production of speech. They also attempt to offer articulatory descriptions of various sounds by describing the air-stream-mechanism and the phonatory and articulatory process involved. Acoustic phoneticians examine the physical nature of sounds and analyse the speech waves with the help of various instruments.

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